

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

1. (Original) A method for verifying a check, comprising:
  - scanning, at a point-of-sale location, the check to obtain data from a MICR line of the check, the data including a one-way hash value;
  - obtaining, at the point-of-sale location, customer-specific information that is not included on the check;
  - providing, from the point-of-sale location to a check verifier, the scanned data and the customer-specific information;
  - receiving, by the check verifier, the key from a source other than the point-of-sale location;
  - computing, by the check verifier, a one-way hash value based on a specific hash algorithm, the data from the MICR line, the customer-specific information, and the key; and
  - determining, by the check verifier, if the computed one-way hash value is the same as the one-way hash value obtained from the MICR line of the check.
2. (Original) The method according to claim 1, wherein the one-way hash value of the check is included as an n-digit field at one end of the MICR line.
3. (Currently Amended) A check verification system, comprising:
  - ~~a bank;~~
  - a check printer ~~that prints~~ adapted to print checks based on information provided thereto, the information including a MICR line that includes an ABA number of a bank and a customer account number,
  - wherein the check printer ~~prints~~ is further adapted to print the information on the MICR line based on information provided from ~~the~~ a bank, the information including an n-digit

personal code that is not printed on the check and an l-bit key that is not printed on the check, and

wherein a p-bit hash value is provided on the MICR line based on the information provided from the bank.

4. (Original) The check verification system according to claim 3, wherein the MICR line further includes a value corresponding to a check number.

5. (Currently Amended) The check verification system according to claim 3, further comprising:

a check verifier ~~that verifies adapted to verify~~ checks based on the information on the MICR line provided to the check verifier by an entity desiring authentication of a check presented for payment, along with the l-bit key provided to the check verifier,

wherein the check verifier ~~computes is further adapted to compute~~ a hash value for the check based on the information on the MICR line, along with information not on the MICR line that is separately provided to the check verifier by ~~either the bank or the entity desiring authentication of the check presented for payment~~.

6. (Currently Amended) A computer program product for creating a self-authenticating check, the computer program product, when executed on a computer, performing a method comprising:

creating a payor field on a face of the check;

creating a payee field on the face of the check;

creating a check amount field on the face of the check; and

creating a MICR line on the face of the check, said MICR line including:

an n-digit ABA number;

an m-digit customer account number;

a p-digit check number; and

an r-digit one-way hash value, and

wherein the r-digit one-way hash value is computed by the computer executing a one-way hash algorithm that uses the ABA number, the customer account number, the check number, a c-digit personal identification code that is not included on the MICR line, and a q-bit key that is not included on the MICR line.

7. (Currently Amended) The ~~self-authenticating check computer program product~~ according to claim 6, wherein the method further comprises printing the r-digit one-way hash value is printed at one end of the MICR line on the face of the check.

8. (Currently Amended) The ~~self-authenticating check computer program product~~ according to claim 6, wherein said MICR line further includes a t-digit product code value that provides information regarding an account from which the check is to be drawn against, and wherein the r-digit one-way hash value is computed by the computer based in part on the t-digit product code.

9. (New) The check verification system according to claim 3, further comprising: a check verifier adapted to verify checks based on the information on the MICR line provided to the check verifier by an entity desiring authentication of a check presented for payment, along with the l-bit key provided to the check verifier, wherein the check verifier is further adapted to compute a hash value for the check based on the information on the MICR line, along with information not on the MICR line that is separately provided to the check verifier by the entity desiring authentication of the check presented for payment.

10. (New) A check verification system, comprising:  
an apparatus adapted to selectively provide information usable by a check printer to print a p-bit hash value on a MICR line of a check, wherein the information includes:  
an ABA number of a bank,  
a customer account number,  
an n-digit personal code that is not printed on the check, and  
and an l-bit key that is not printed on the check.

11. (New) The check verification system according to claim 10, wherein the MICR line further includes a value corresponding to a check number.

12. (New) The check verification system according to claim 10, further comprising:  
a check verifier adapted to verify the check based on the information on the MICR line provided to the check verifier by an entity desiring authentication of the check when presented for payment, along with the 1-bit key provided to the check verifier,  
wherein the check verifier is further adapted to compute a hash value for the check based on the information on the MICR line, along with information not on the MICR line that is separately provided to the check verifier by a bank.

13. (New) The check verification system according to claim 10, further comprising:  
a check verifier adapted to verify the check based on the information on the MICR line provided to the check verifier by an entity desiring authentication of the check when presented for payment, along with the 1-bit key provided to the check verifier,  
wherein the check verifier is further adapted to compute a hash value for the check based on the information on the MICR line, along with information not on the MICR line that is separately provided to the check verifier by the entity desiring authentication of the check presented for payment.

14. (New) The check verification system according to claim 10, wherein the apparatus is to be operated by a bank.